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Viewing cable 09LONDON668, IRAN - ROXANA SABERI: LONDON FRIENDS SAY LAWYER

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09LONDON668**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09LONDON668	2009-03-16 18:07	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy London

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/17/112290/state-department-cables-reveal.html>

VZCZCXRO0845
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHLO #0668/01 0751807
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 161807Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1725
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 000668

SENSITIVE
NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/13/2019
TAGS: [CASC](#) [IR](#) [JA](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PROP](#) [PTER](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN - ROXANA SABERI: LONDON FRIENDS SAY LAWYER
VISITED CLIENT IN EVIN MARCH 9; IRANIAN AMBASSADOR TO TOKYO
OFFERS ENCOURAGEMENT

REF: A. 3/11 E-MAIL EMB LONDON XXXXXXXXXXXX- NEA/IR
[1](#)B. 08 TOKYO 2984 AND 08 LONDON 02789
[1](#)C. 3/16 E-MAILS EMB LONDON XXXXXXXXXXXX) TO NEA/IR
(THIBAUT/TAYLOR/FOLEY)

Classified By: Political Counselor Rick Mills for reasons 1.4 (b) and (

d)

¶1. (S/NF) Summary. A lawyer's visit to Roxana Saberi on March 9 indicated Ms. Saberi was encouraged by news of efforts being made on her behalf, but is generally distraught at her situation. According to UK Embassy Tehran, the charges against Ms Saberi were brought in by a court which tries national security matters; she is alleged to have filed news stories after her Iran press accreditation was pulled in 2006. Friends of Ms. Saberi's have expressed their personal concern to Embassy London and have passed to Poloff supportive e-mails about Ms Saberi said to be from Iranian Ambassador to Japan Araghchi and from a former USG official, and well known author, not personally known to Poloff. End summary

FCO Not Optimistic

¶2. (S/NF) FCO contacts on March 12 and 13 told Poloff UK Embassy Tehran expects, based on feedback from Saberi's lawyer, that her release is "not imminent." FCO contacts told Poloff that both MFA and the judiciary have said Saberi's arrest stemmed from a writ issued by the Revolutionary Court, which tries national security offenses. FCO contacts said the UK Embassy is expecting to have contact with Ms. Saberi's lawyer in the coming days.

Ms. Saberi's UK-Based Friends Reach Out

¶3. (S/NF) The lawyer for detained American citizen Roxana Saberi visited her in Evin Prison on March 9, according to a telephone call London Iran Watcher (Poloff) received March 11 (ref a) from a dual American-Iranian citizen working for BBC-Persian. The U.S. citizen BBC caller, previously known to Poloff, passed on that, according to Saberi's lawyer, Ms. Saberi is emotionally distraught, but also somewhat encouraged by efforts being made on her behalf by USG and (unspecified) others.

¶4. (SBU) Poloff's BBC contact said she was calling as a private citizen and expressed concern for the welfare of Ms. Saberi, whom she described as a close friend. Poloff reiterated the concerns for Ms. Saberi's safety publicly expressed by the Secretary, that protection of American citizens abroad is the USG's highest priority, and that Ms. Saberi, her dual nationality notwithstanding, is entitled to the full range of USG protection and advocacy enjoyed by all U.S. citizens.

¶5. (S/NF) The BBC contact said her information on Saberi's arrest status came via a UK citizen, a London-based fund manager, who is also a friend of Saberi, who has been in direct touch with Saberi's lawyer. Poloff asked that any and all information on Saberi's situation and welfare be shared.

¶6. (S/NF) The BBC contact on March 13 told Poloff she and the UK fund manager and other friends of Saberi began receiving "spam" e-mails from Saberi's e-mail address after February 1: the contact thought the e-mails might have been manipulated by regime authorities. The BBC contact noted the e-mails used poor English, using Iranian-style syntax, and that the last e-mail the BBC contact had received that she thought was clearly from Roxana herself had been January 29.

Her Friends Know Araghchi

¶7. (S/NF) The BBC contact noted that the fund manager is not herself Iranian but had, as a private student in 2006, studied at a Tehran think tank associated with Iran's Foreign Ministry (she was uncertain of the name or acronym), and that the fund manager's tutor is now Iran's Ambassador to Japan, Syed Abbas Araghchi.

¶8. (S/NF) The fund manager, who called Poloff March 16, also forwarded to Poloff an e-mail (ref c) she said she had

received March 9 from Ambassador Araghchi. Araghchi's e-mail says: "I fully understand your sympathy and concerns about Roxana. Good news are coming And I am confident she will be freed soon (sic)."

Bob Baer Reportedly Says
IRI Gesture is in the Works

¶9. (S/NF) The fund manager also forwarded to Poloff an e-mail (ref c) she had received March 10, apparently from former USG official and author Bob Baer; Baer's e-mail states "Iranians will release her in a gesture to the U.S., especially as Afghan talks get under way. Any relevant updates I will send through (sic). We are very anxious that Roxana be released as soon as possible and let me know if I can help in any way."

Comment

¶10. (S/NF) UK Embassy's informal focus on the Saberi case appears to be active and continuing, despite the ending last week of Ambassador Adam's tour in Iran; FCO contacts March 13 told Poloff that IRI authorities have granted "agreement" for incoming Ambassador Simon Gass, who is due to arrive in Tehran in mid-April. Celebrations of the Persian New Year, which begin this week and traditionally continue in Iran to the end of March, conceivably may delay the regime's decision process.

¶11. (S/NF) Embassy can neither directly assess Baer's statement nor predict with precision what role if any Ambassador Araghchi may be playing as the Iranian regime considers its detention of Ms. Saberi. Araghchi, by reputation a moderate, able, and respected diplomat, and described by his former pupil, the London fund manager, as "a wonderful man," was briefly mentioned (ref b), in connection with Qalibaf's Japan visit last fall. While Araghchi was Deputy Foreign Minister (2006-2007) there was speculation in the press and among some Poloff contacts that policy tensions between Araghchi and Ahmedinejad contributed to Araghchi's subsequent posting to Tokyo. Araghchi's relationship to his former students (the fund manager and the AmCit BBC contact) appears cordial.

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LEBARON